

What to do if you have a conflict of interest.

Check the charity's rules and any legislation that applies to the charity to understand your legal duty about handling or avoiding conflicts of interest. Ask the charity if it promotes a culture of disclosure around conflicts of interest, whether this is a standing agenda item at board meetings and if records are kept.

Read the charity's written conflict of interest policy and ask if they keep the register of interests for staff and the members of your board up to date. If you decide to join the board, always follow the policy.

When making any decisions, ask yourself, would an independent observer think I was acting in the best interests of my charity or in my own interests? If there was any doubt, it is best to declare the conflict. Before participating in a decision on any issue that you may have a conflict of interest, declare your conflict first.

Don't be embarrassed to declare a conflict of interest. Some board members may have one or several. A conflict of interest may not automatically remove you from the decision-making process, but it will allow others to determine if your involvement is appropriate.

Do not vote on or discuss matters if you have a conflict of interest. If necessary, or if asked to, leave the room for the discussion.